

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00

AID-05 ARA-06 IO-11 /092 W

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R 271751Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7860

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMCONSUL TANGIER

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 1154

PARIS ALSO PASS AMBASSADOR ANDERSON

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SP SS AG MR

SUBJECT: THE US INTEREST IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN - I

1. PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE FROM THIS POST, I WISH TO STATE  
CLEARLY AND UNMISTAKABLY MY VIEWS ON THE U.S. NATIONAL  
INTEREST IN THIS AREA. THERE WILL BE SEVERAL MESSAGES.

2. IN STATE 303856 (DEC. 30, 1975) THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAS  
CLEARLY OUTLINED USG POLICY OBJECTIVES TOWARD OTHER COUNTRIES  
WHOSE POLICIES AND ACTIONS ARE OFTEN OR EVEN CONSISTENTLY  
ADVERSE OR HOSTILE TO THE INTERESTS OF THE U.S. WHILE  
REFTEL WAS SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED TO MULTILATERAL DIPLO-  
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MACY, IT REPRESENTED CLEARLY MORE GENERAL POLICY GUIDANCE.

3. NOW IF THERE IS ONE COUNTRY WHICH QUALIFIES CLEARLY AS PLACING ITSELF DELIBERATELY AND ON A WORLD-WIDE BASIS IN AN ADVERSARY POSITION TO THE U.S., IT IS ALGERIA. SERVING AS A MAJOR AIRLIFT AND SUPPLY CENTER FOR THE SOVIET-CUBAN INVASION OF ANGOLA IS ONLY THE LATEST EXAMPLE. IN FACT I WOULD GO FARTHER AND CONCLUDE THAT ALGERIA'S EFFECTIVE, ENERGETIC DIPLOMACY HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN A KEY ELEMENT IN GIVING LEFTIST, THIRD WORLD "REVOLUTIONARY" FORCES AND FRONTS (INCLUDING RADICAL POSITIONS IN OPEC, CALLS FOR "NEW ECONOMIC ORDERS." ETC.) GREATER COHERENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS THAN THEY MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE HAD. ALGERIAN FM BOUTEFLIKA HAS DISPLAYED SPECIAL TALENT IN THAT REGARD.

4. THEREFORE IT WOULD SEEM TO ME THAT THE LOGIC OF STATE 303856 APPLIES VERY PROMINENTLY TO ALGERIA. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ANY SUCCESSES FOR ALGERIA IS ITS CURRENT SAHARA CAMPAIGN AGAINST MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA LIES PRECISELY IN THE SUPPORT WHICH SUCH SUCCESSES WOULD GIVE ALGERIA'S PRETENSIONS OF LEDERSHIP, OR, CONTRARYWISE, THE BLOW TO THE LEADERSHIP CLAIM THAT WOULD LIE IN AN ALGERIAN DEFEAT. THEREFORE, IT SEEMS TO ME RATHER LOGICAL THAT AN ALGERIAN VICTORY ON THE SAHARA QUESTION IS MOST DEFINITELY NOT, RPT NOT IN THE U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST, AND THAT QUITE TO THE CONTRARY, AN ALGERIAN DEFEAT IS, RPT IS IN OUR INTEREST, AS WELL AS THAT OF EUROPE AND THE WESTERN WORLD IN GENERAL. AND I WOULD ASSERT THIS QUITE IRRESPECTIVE OF OUR INTERESTS IN MOROCCO. EVEN IF WE HAD LITTLE OR NO INTEREST IN MOROCCO, THE ABOVE RATIONALE WOULD STILL STAND.

5. IN AM THEREFORE AT SOME LOSS TO UNDERSTAND REPEATED EVIDENCE OF CODDLING THE ALGERIANS AND REASSURING THEM OF OUR "NEUTRALITY" EVEN THOUGH IT MUST BE CLEAR THAT WE DON'T QUITE MEAN IT. OF COURSE WE SHOULD NOT FLEX OUR MUSCLES JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT AND WE SHOULD AVOID UNNECESSARY PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS OF PARTISANSHIP FOR MOROCCO. BUT I MUST STRONGLY, THOUGH HIGHLY RESPECTFULLY DISAGREE WITH AMBASSADOR PARKER'S SUGGESTION THAT WE

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SHOULD BE LESS KIND TO KING HASSAN RE HELP, FLEET VISITS, ETC.. NO, EVEN IF WE DID NOT FEEL PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN MOROCCO PER SE--AND WE ARE--WE SHOULD NOT RPT NOT DIMINISH ALGERIA'S PRESENT DISCOMFITURE WHICH THEY RICHLY DESERVE FOR THEIR LONG-STANDING NASTINESS TOWARD U.S. INTERESTS.

6. THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE ARGUMENTS AGAINST THIS:

A. ECONOMIC, I.E., THE FEAR THAT ALGERIA WOULD RETALIATE AGAINST OUR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS THERE WHICH ARE CONSIDERABLE AND GROWING. I TEND TO DISMISS THIS OUT OF HAND. LET US FACE FACTS: ALGERIA IS PRACTICALLY BANKRUPT. WITH A TWO AND ONE-FOURTH BILLION DOLLAR DEFICIT, INCREASING INFLATION, DECREASED OIL AND GAS SALES AND MANY UNWISE INVESTMENTS AND PURCHASES, ALGERIA WOULD BE MAD TO INTERFERE WITH ITS ONE GREAT ASSET, I.E. ITS PARADOXICAL BUT DEMONSTRATED ABILITY TO AMASS LARGE-SCALE FOREIGN CREDITS. EVEN SO, AS WE HAVE HEARD, THE GOA HAS BEEN FORCED TO CUT BACK DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES BY 17 PERCENT TO PAY FOR RECENT ACCELERATED ARMS SHIPMENTS. THIS CANNOT BE WITHOUT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COSTS OF ITS OWN. ALGERIA'S WILLINGNESS TO SHAVE PETROLEUM PRICES HAS WEAKENED ITS ROLE IN OPEC. AND THE MORE FLEXIBLE POSITION ADOPTED BY THE U.S. IN THE CIEC DISCUSSIONS HAS REDUCED ALGERIA'S INFLUENCE IN REFORMING WORLD ECONOMIC MECHANISMS--PARTICULARLY AMONG MORE MODERATE LDCS. WE WOULD HAVE HEARD MUCH MORE ABOUT ALGERIA'S ECONOMIC PLIGHT WERE IT NOT FOR THE FACT THAT SO MANY WESTERN BANKS ARE OVEREXTENDED IN ALGERIA TO A DEGREE THAT THEY DO NOT WISH TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THEIR "PROBLEM LOANS." BOTH SIDES THUS HOLD HOSTAGES AND HAVE A CONCERTED INTEREST IN MAINTAINING THE COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP, POLITICS ASIDE. NO, ALGERIAN CANNOT USE THE ECONOMIC WEAPON WITHOUT CAUSING SERIOUS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS FOR ITSELF--THOUGH HERE AGAIN ONE CANNOT DISMISS IRRATIONAL BEHAVIOR.

B. WAR. MADRID 1405 MOVED ME DEEPLY, BUT MORE TO MIRTH THAN TO TEARS OVER THE DOOMSDAY SCENARIO SPREAD BY THE REMNANTS OF CORTINA'S DISCREDITED COHORTS IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE. BUT I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF IT. AS WE HAVE STATED REPEATEDLY: ALGERIAN MILITARY STRENGTH  
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IS APPRECIABLY GREATER IN MATERIEL THAN MOROCCO'S AND WILL REMAIN SO. BUT IT IS NOT RPT NOT SO GREAT AS TO PERMIT A SUCCESSFUL BLITZKRIEG. CERTAINLY NOT IN THE SOUTH WHERE THE MOROCCANS ARE STRONGER. FARTHER NORTH THE ALGERIANS COULD CROSS THE BORDER TOWARD OUJDA OR KSAR-ES-SOUK AND TAKE THOSE PLACES, WHICH MIGHT NOT EVEN BE DEFENDED IN ANY DETERMINED FASHION. BUT THEN WHAT? THE ALGERIANS WOULD BE UP AGAINST THE RIF AND THE HIGH ATLAS, REGIONS WHICH HAVE PROVEN MOST INHOSPITABLE TO INVADERS AND WHICH FAVOR THE DEFENDER. ALSO, THE FACT THAT THE MOROCCANS ARE ABSOLUTELY UNITED INTERNALLY VIS-A-VIS ALGERIA, AND WOULD BE MOST PLEASED TO CUT AS MANY ALGERIAN THROATS AS POSSIBLE, MIGHT GIVE AN INVADER SOME THOUGHT. TO INVADE AND GO ON TO CRUSHING VICTORY IS ONE THING. TO INVADE AND BOG DOWN IS QUITE ANOTHER,

AS SEVERAL COUNTRIES HAVE DISCOVERED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RABAT 1154

PARIS ALSO PASS AMBASSADOR ANDERSON

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

7. THEREFORE, A MAJOR WAR IS POSSIBLE (UNLESS ONE ASSUMES TOTAL IRRATIONALITY) ONLY WITH STRONG SOVIET-CUBAN HELP. BUT UP TO THE PRESENT THE SOVIETS APPEAR TO BE APPLYING THE BRAKES TO THEIR ALGERIAN FRIENDS RATHER THAN THE ACCELERATOR. ALL SIGNS SUGGEST A GENUINE SOVIET CONCERN THAT MASSIVE SOVIET-CUBAN INTERVENTION WOULD PLACE THE USSR IN TOTAL OPPOSITION TO ALMOST ALL THE ARABS AND GREATLY UPSET THEIR EUROPEAN POLICY--EVEN IF AMERICAN WERE TO FIND COUNTERBALANCING INTERVENTION IMPOSSIBLE--WHICH IN SUCH A SENSITIVE AREA CANNOT BE ASSUMED EVEN AFTER ANGOLA. HENCE THE RUSSIANS, WHO SEEMED TO HAVE CALCULATED THEIR RISKS CAREFULLY IN ANGOLA, ARE UNLIKELY

TO TAKE UP THE ALGERIAN OPTION. I THEREFORE CONSIDER  
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THE RUSSIAN BOGEY, TO WHICH BOTH ALGERIANS AND MOROCCANS  
POINT FOR OPPOSITE REASONS, AS THOROUGHLY UNCONVINCING.  
(I WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY TOTALLY, HOWEVER,  
IF THE CONFLICT WERE TO BE VERY MUCH PROLONGED, BUT I  
SEE NO REASON TO CHANGE MY MIND IN THE IMMEDIATELY FORE-  
SEEABLE FUTURE.)

8. I CANNOT COMMENT ON POSSIBLE USG INTERESTS IN ALGERIA  
VIS-A-VIS THE MIDDLE EAST, AS I AM NOT PRIVY TO WHAT MAY  
BE GOING ON. BUT TO SUM UP--FROM WHERE I SIT, I WOULD  
LET THE ALGERIANS STEW IN THEIR OWN JUICE, NOT PROVOKING  
BUT CERTAINLY NOT PLACATING OR REASSURING THEM EITHER.

9. MOREOVER, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE U.S. FOREIGN POLICY  
GUIDED BY GREATER CONSISTENCY. I DEPLORE THE RECURRENT  
INTERFERENCE WITH WELL THOUGHT-OUT, LONG-RANGE PROGRAMS  
THAT HAS RECENTLY CHARACTERIZED OUR PROGRAMS HERE BECAUSE  
OF WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE EXCESSIVE CONCERN FOR DAY TO DAY  
TACTICAL PROBLEMS.

10. STRENGTH, CALMNESS UNDER FIRE, CONSISTENT PURSUIT  
OF POLICY GAIN RESPECT. AS COUNTRIES BECOME USED TO  
THE FACT THAT WE ARE POLITELY INDIFFERENT TO CONSTANT  
COMPLAINTS BUT THAT WE TEND, ONCE ON COURSE, TO PERSEVERE,  
THEY WILL EVENTUALLY ACCEPT THIS APPROACH AND BADGER US  
LESS. BOTH FRENCH AND SOVIET DIPLOMACY HAVE BENEFITED  
FROM SUCH AN ATTITUDE.  
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